



February 22, 2019

Dear Interested Person:

The Fish and Wildlife Commission is proposing amendments to the Bitterroot River Commercial Use Permit administrative rules. The proposal notice outlining the proposed amendments is attached for your reference.

The Commission is proposing the amendments to address concerns that were raised with the rules since their adoption in 2018. Concerns include:

- Section lengths are too short at high flows, when float trips easily extend into the next river section. As a result, commercial use is further restricted at high water since it takes multiple floats to conduct one trip.
- Using the "float" restriction encourages congestion at accesses at section boundaries. Using "launches" would allow floating into downstream sections that allow commercial use, so it spreads out use of the access sites.

The department analyzed the 2018 monitoring data and based on the data analysis and feedback provided, the Commission is proposing amending Administrative Rule of Montana 12.11.6302 to change "floats" to "launches," provide a definition for "launch," and provide a timeframe from June 1 to September 15 for the launch restriction per section of river for commercial use permit holders, instead of the restriction being year-round. The commission is also proposing to amend ARM 12.11.6306 to reflect the correct starting year that the five-year review is to occur, from 2024 to 2022. These amendments should ease restrictions on commercial users, spread out congestion at access sites, and not affect non-commercial use in restricted sections.

A public hearing will be held on March 19, 2019 at 6 p.m. at the Bitterroot National Forest Supervisor's Office, 1801 North 1<sup>st</sup> Street in Hamilton, Montana to discuss the proposed changes and take public comment. Public comments must be received no later than March 22, 2019 and can be provided at the public hearing or in writing to:

Bitterroot River Recreation  
Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
3201 Spurgin Road  
Missoula, MT, 59804  
or e-mail: [shrose@mt.gov](mailto:shrose@mt.gov)

Thank you for your interest in Montana's fish, wildlife, and parks!